

Claims

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4 *Sub a'* 1. A method for a business to securely distribute
5 document folders to recipients, said method comprising the
6 steps of:

7 sending an electronic document folder to a
8 network of interconnected computers;

9 notifying each recipient of electronic document
10 folders intended for said recipient by means of giving said
11 recipient an indirect reference to each electronic document
12 folder intended for said recipient;

13 selecting a destination location for each
14 recipient to receive the electronic document folders
15 intended for said recipient, using data provided by said
16 recipient; and

17
18 accumulating the sent electronic document folders
19 at said destination location.

20 2. The method of claim 1, wherein the data provided by
21 each recipient is from the group comprising document
22 reception address data and additional document reception
23 data.
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25 3. The method of claim 2, wherein the document
26 reception address data comprises at least one of path
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1 information and a method for network document folder
2 delivery.

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4 4. The method of claim 2, wherein the additional
5 document reception data comprises at least one of receiving
6 device capabilities and document reception location data.

7 5. The method of claim 1, wherein the indirect
8 reference to each document folder comprises a folder code
9 containing information needed to retrieve the document
10 folder.

11 6. The method of claim 5, wherein the folder code is a
12 privacy code.

13
14 7. The method of claim 5, wherein the folder code is
15 mediacard data, said mediacard data delivered to each
16 recipient prior to said recipient's accessing an electronic
17 document folder.

18 8. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step
19 of modifying the data for best recipient use with regard to
20 capabilities of a receiving device at said destination
21 location.

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23 9. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step
24 of a server located on the network of interconnected
25 computers recording an acknowledgement of a delivery of an
26 electronic document folder and making said acknowledgment
27 available to a sender.
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1 10. The method of claim 1, further comprising the
2 step of a recipient retrieving an electronic document
3 folder based upon providing information contained in said
4 indirect reference.

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6 11. The method of claim 1, further comprising the
7 step of authenticating at least some documents within the
8 electronic document folders.

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10 12. The method of claim 11, wherein the
11 authenticating step comprises a seal engine attaching a
12 seal to at least one document within an electronic document
13 folder.

14 13. The method of claim 12, wherein the attached seal
15 comprises information contained in the at least one
16 document and information not contained in the at least one
17 document.

18 14. The method of claim 13, wherein the information
19 not contained in the at least one document comprises at
20 least one from the group comprising a date of transmission,
21 a time of transmission, a protocol identification,
22 information known only by an intended recipient, and a file
23 size.
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25 15. The method of claim 1, wherein at least one
26 document within a sent document folder has printable
27 representation.
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1 16. The method of claim 1, wherein at least one
2 document folder comprises exactly one document.

3 17. The method of claim 1, wherein the electronic
4 document folders are sent using virtual private network
5 security.
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7 18. The method of claim 1, further comprising the
8 step of charging a recipient upon the recipient's taking
9 delivery of an electronic document folder when the
10 electronic document folder has been sent C.O.D.

11 19. The method of claim 1, further comprising the
12 step of charging a recipient upon the recipient taking
13 delivery of an electronic document folder when the
14 electronic document folder has been stored on the network
15 beyond an agreed-upon period of time.
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17 20. The method of claim 1, further comprising the
18 step of a recipient specifying a date of expiration of an
19 electronic document folder temporarily stored on the
20 network.
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22 21. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of
23 notifying each recipient comprises sending a notification
24 via email.

25 22. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of
26 notifying each recipient comprises sending a notification
27 over a cellular phone.
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1 23. The method of claim 1, further comprising the
2 step of converting a sent electronic document folder into a
3 page description language before sending a link to the
4 electronic document folder to a recipient.
5

6 24. A system for a business to securely distribute
7 document folders to recipients, said system comprising:

8 at least one sending device for sending to and
9 temporarily storing electronic document folders on a
10 network of interconnected computers;

11 at least one destination computer for
12 accumulating electronic document folders that have been
13 sent to the network of interconnected computers; and
14

15 coupled to each destination computer, a receiving
16 device for delivering electronic document folders to
17 recipients.

18 25. The system of claim 24, further comprising a
19 notification device for notifying a recipient of a sent
20 electronic document folder, by means of an indirect
21 reference to the electronic document folder, said
22 notification device from the group comprising a Web-enabled
23 personal computer, a Web-enabled Internet appliance, and a
24 cellular telephone.
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26 26. The system of claim 24, wherein said network of
27 interconnected computers is from the group comprising the
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1 Internet, an intranet, a wide-area network, and a local
2 area network.

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4 27. The system of claim 24, wherein the at least one
5 sending device is from the group comprising a scanner, a
6 facsimile machine, and a computer.

7 28. The system of claim 24, wherein the receiving
8 device is from the group comprising a Web-enabled personal
9 computer, a Web-enabled printer, a Web-connected digital
10 copier, and a Web-enabled Internet appliance.

11 29. The system of claim 24, wherein the at least one
12 destination computer is located at a partnership facility
13 having a pre-established relationship with the business.

14 30. The system of claim 24, further comprising an
15 administrative subsystem coupled to the network of
16 interconnected computers for managing system resources
17 based on requests of senders and recipients of electronic
18 document folders.
19

20 31. The system of claim 30, further comprising a
21 billing subsystem coupled to the administrative subsystem
22 for detecting monetizing events and charging at least one
23 of a sender and a recipient upon the occurrence of a
24 monetizing event.
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1 32. The system of claim 31, further comprising a
2 billing database coupled to the billing subsystem for
3 maintaining and adjusting accounts of senders and
4 recipients based on information received from the billing
5 subsystem.
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7 33. The system of claim 31, wherein a monetizing
8 event is sending an electronic document folder.

9 34. The system of claim 31, wherein a monetizing
10 event is sending an electronic document folder C.O.D.

11 35. The system of claim 31, wherein a monetizing event
12 is temporarily storing an electronic document folder on the
13 network beyond an agreed-upon period of time.
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15 36. The system of claim 31, wherein a monetizing
16 event is a recipient requesting that a sent electronic
17 document folder be authenticated.

18 37. The system of claim 24, further comprising a seal
19 engine coupled to the network of interconnected computers
20 for attaching a seal to at least one document within an
21 electronic document folder.
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23 38. A computer readable medium containing a computer
24 program product for a business to securely distribute
25 document folders to recipients, said computer program
26 product comprising:
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1 program code for causing the sending of
2 electronic document folders to a network of interconnected
3 computers;
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5 program code for notifying a recipient of a sent
6 electronic document folder by means of an indirect
7 reference to the electronic document folder;

8 program code for selecting a destination computer
9 for an electronic document folder using data provided by a
10 recipient; and

11 program code for accumulating sent electronic
12 document folders at the destination computer.
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